

## MASSACHUSETTS PLOUGHMAN. AND THE YANKEE FARMER.

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## AGRICULTURE.

### DIFFERENT MODES OF SUBDUING BOGS.

MR. EDITOR:—The treatment necessary to reclaim "dead meadows," "hog meadows," and "peat meadows," is not discussed upon your paper, and many good articles on that subject have appeared, notwithstanding there has been a disagreement as to the best method.

Some have argued that gravel is as good as loam; others that the contrary is a good answer, anything to change the nature of the soil, where there is none!

There is a great difference in bog meadows, though they are but bog meadows. It may not be a very hard matter to get them into a state in which they will produce good crops, quality and of large burden; but from the little experience I have I believe it will be hard to keep the old heads down. I have a small piece in which the bogs were cut and levelled with the surface about the year 1817, and after being covered with the ground grass covered about eight inches thick with gravel. This was covered with loam and compost, and sowed; it has ever since produced a large garden of hay, but for ten years the bogs have been running up, so that some of them will now be quite an impediment to a cart wheel on an ordinary road. I know they may be cut off again, but I doubt whether they can be killed only by drawing them by the roots, which will be a work of time, if they are found in great quantities. I have more faith in peat meadows and it is now my purpose to state some facts in the treatment of them under my own observation, and if anything worthy of notice is found, my time will not be wholly lost.

I am the fourth line descendant of the same farm; on it I was born and brought up; of course here are my first recollections. On the farm is a piece of peat meadow containing about fifteen acres, which I have been told, was originally quite wet, but a ditch having been cut around it, the outlet being sufficient, drained it to a such a degree, that, since my remembrance, not to say enough grown on it to pay the getting; and so it lay for the road side, it was always mowed for the "hocks" sake. It lies somewhat in the shape of a tray—the shore is rather bold, and the bottom (except near the shore) has never been found. I think I find my account in making first use of it in compost manure.

About thirty five years ago, a small piece, say half an acre, was covered about four inches thick with gravel, wash of the road, &c., and then sufficiently top-dressed to make the grass grow well; it was then sowed, and has ever since, by top-dressing once a year, and by the use of manure, to speak within bounds, at the rate of two tons of good hay to the acre, and a large after crop.

When the above named piece was sowed, it was half in meadow, and half an acre, and has been in size, and is now so dry that a team with a load of manure will go to almost any part of it, in the working season of the year without miring. The meadow having been pretty thoroughly drained, some years ago, after the preparation of the above named piece, another of the like quantity was prepared in a similar way, which being naturally dryer ground, has produced hay of better quality, and of nearly equal burden.

On a piece of about 3-4 of an acre, which had been laid down some years without any top-dressing, and nearly "run out," in 1838 or 1839, I put about ten cart (30 bushels) loads of gravel, and the next year about 25 bushels of manure, compost, equal quantities of horse manure and loam. With a top-dressing of barn-yard manure, this ground now yields me two good crops in a year. Another piece of about the same quantity, 3-4 of an acre, since treated in a similar manner, gives me as good an income.

In 1812 I planted a large acre with potatoes, and dug them in the fore part of Oct., cleared the tops from the ground, harrowed it and put on about a bushel of horse manure, and as an experiment, I sowed half a bushel of winter rye on a part of it, and then bushed it in. Before sowing, however, I spread say, twenty cart (25 bushels) loads of compost manure, made of loam, horse manure, cattle manure, wash, &c., mixed in a place that catches almost every thing but money. I mowed the grass on this piece, this year, about the 25th of July; it yielded me as I thought, about a ton; and by the first of Oct. I might have cut a decent crop of rye. From my half bushel of rye I obtained about six bushels.

Last fall I put the plough into a piece of about 3-4 of an acre, thinking to plant it with potatoes another year, but I altered my mind, and set out at about a bushel of horse manure, and as an experiment, I sowed half a bushel of winter rye on a part of it, and then bushed it in. Before sowing, however, I spread say, twenty cart (25 bushels) loads of compost manure, made of loam, horse manure, cattle manure, wash, &c., mixed in a place that catches almost every thing but money. I mowed the grass on this piece, this year, about the 25th of July; it yielded me as I thought, about a ton; and by the first of Oct. I might have cut a decent crop of rye. From my half bushel of rye I obtained about six bushels.

Very Respectfully,  
THOMAS W. WARD.  
Shrewsbury, Dec. 28, 1843.

MR. WARD, we believe, is a lineal descendant of General Ward, who was a commissioner at the commencement of our revolution; and he is the fourth lineal owner of the same farm—not a very common case among our restless population.

He well observes there is a great difference in bog and peat meadows, of course they require different treatment. It is a well substantiated fact that gravel—mere gravel, on some of these, proves as beneficial as any material that can be applied. There are some cold bogs in Andover and other towns in Essex county that have been brought to bear most excellent grass by a dressing of gravel alone.

and draining, and gravel was more successful for these two purposes than clay, sand, or even the rich heavy loams from your high lands. On some bogs gravelly loam is best; and on other bogs loam from the roadside answers a good purpose.

While on some bogs of light and puffy surface, clay is found to be the best article that can be procured. It renders the surface more tenacious and capable of holding a proper degree of moisture for the vegetation of the finer grasses.

Clay enough for these purposes is excellent on a bog of this kind; yet if you cover your bog a foot deep with clay you will be troubled with its excess as you always are on high lands. We only want clay enough to give the surface a proper consistency.

Our correspondent doubts whether any mode can be adopted to keep the old heads down, and whether pure English can long be obtained, even with frequent dressings of manure, on these bogs. This is a most important query for the consideration of every cultivator of low grounds—this is an objection that has aroused the attention of many owners of bog meadows.

Well, suppose it will be impossible by top dressing, to secure, for many years in succession, a good burden of pure hay. Can you do it in any of your upland fields? Have you any old grounds that will give you half a crop of pure hay without renovation by breaking up the sward and sowing down again?

We are confident you have not. All your old fields need breaking up occasionally, either, or they will bind out and destroy the nicest kinds of grass. We have therefore advised our friends to lay out their grounds in the commencement in such a form that the whole may be easily broken up with the plough. Most of these bogs, when properly drained, become hard as soon as the good grasses have taken firm hold; and if the ditches are made to run parallel with each other, the plough will do the principal business of renovating the grass land.

When the meadow is mired the off ox should not be made to travel in the furrow. A large ear may be attached to the beam, or a pair of wheels may be made to run so as to keep the plough right while the oxen have a good footing on the unbroke sward.

But in his first trial in 1817 a greater error was committed in burying the rich mud of the meadow to the depth of eight inches. Four would have been better for the first covering, and four would have completely smothered, for a time, all the coarse growth of grass, provided the surface was first made even by bog hoes.

Still as this first lot has produced a large burden from 1817 to this time, the reclaiming of it has not been an unprofitable concern to the owner.

The other lots of Mr. Ward have been reclaimed in different ways, and our readers will perceive that where a smaller quantity of gravel and loam was applied the product has been better than on the first lot that had been covered deep. There is no necessity for putting on more than two or three inches of earth at any one time, even when we undertake to subside the ground by means of covering it only.

In some cases it may be advisable to plant the ground, and potatoes are often found to succeed well in meadows. But we run too much risk in planting corn or sowing rye in such land. Corn is a different feeding, and a English grain must have a different dressing—a footing of gravel, sand, and clay intermixed, or it is heads will be light.

If the old peat surface proves beneficial we shall be disappointed. That has its acid sooner on high gravelly soils than in meadows which are naturally sour. We hope Mr. Ward will let us know next season how the peat has operated on his meadow.

Mr. Ward will oblige us by making further communications for publication.—One such letter as this from a practical and experienced farmer is worth more than a whole library of speculations by people who write without acquaintance with the subject discussed. [Editor.]

### WILL POTATOES MAKE MILK COWS POOR?

MR. EDITOR:—I noticed in the Ploughman of December 23d, in a communication from your correspondent Cui the following statement. "Potatoes will make a milk cow grow poor." And in your remarks following you say nothing about it, thus tacitly giving assent. I would like to know if it is indeed so? What means then the hue and cry we heard but a short time ago, "roots for stock!"—"roots for stock!" Were all our wise heads mistaken about this and some of them in ignorance blindly leading the blind into the ditch? Are roots, or any one kind of roots commonly given to stock really of no benefit; say, worse than that, a positive injury?

One fact and I have done. I have a small dairy of four or five cows; they are, and have been, for many winters past; kept principally on meadow hay (of which your correspondent speaks very slightly) with other coarse fodder and about a peck of potatoes, carrots or turnips to each cow per day. It is a fact they are not poor, notwithstanding they eat potatoes. It is a fact, too, that by using the thermometer and measuring the cream at a proper temperature that no witches ever trouble, the butter is not objectionable and "wont come." And it is a fact too that the butter is abundantly fit to eat when "it has come."

S. F. P.  
December 20th, 1843, "Down East."

It is a very prevalent notion that milk cows will not gain flesh on potatoes; many think they grow poor by eating them. But what! They give out more milk, and we continue to give them potatoes. Does any one doubt that cows will be poorer in the spring for being milked through the winter instead of going dry for four months?—Yet we milk them.

### ON ROTTING GREEN SWARD.

MR. EDITOR:—I have upon my premises a narrow strip of land, say 75 or 80 rods, which has for several years been down to grass, and is now covered with a thick, tough, sward. The land above mentioned was for the purpose of widening a road. As I intend to remove the top soil to different parts of my farm, I wish to be informed of the easiest, and cheapest, method of converting the sward, into compost or manure.

The method I had thought of adopting was this:—When the turf was covered with a thick coat of vegetation, to take it off in strips of a convenient size, and commence a pile by placing two layers, (grass sides together,) putting between them a quantity of unleached ashes, and continuing until I had raised the pile to a suitable height. Would this method answer a better purpose than ashes, or would it be better to convey the turf to my barn cellar, and put it to operation upon the roots of half a dozen vines? Will you have the goodness to advise me in this matter, and under the obligation upon a subscriber to your valuable paper and a YOUNG FARMER.

Newbury, Jan. 3, 1844.

MR. EDITOR:—The sward will become rotten very soon if taken off in June and laid in a pile four feet in height, even without any mixture of lime or ashes.

In many places there is a lack of loam to be thrown into the bog-pit and the cow-yard. These places should be first supplied by all means, and there is nothing better than the furrow slices of upland soil for this purpose. The best of peat moss is no better than this surface soil for the greater portion of our fields.

As the leached and unleached, are excellent on dry lands and porous soils; they make such more compact and retentive of moisture, and they contribute much to the rotting of all fibrous matter.

Unleached, or fresh lime, will create some heat in the process of slaking, and may thus be useful to prepare peat mud and upland turf to become food for plants; and if you can buy good fresh lime for half the cost of good wood ashes, you may possibly find your account in it. But the usual price you will find lime as dear "a manure" as podrette is.

We consider one bushel of good wood ashes of much more value than the same quantity of lime. Professed chemists may tell you a different story, but time will teach you not to believe every story. [Editor.]

### GOOD BEEF—SCALDING MILK.

MR. EDITOR:—As there are exceptions to all general rules, so I believe there are exceptions to some general sayings. It is generally said that bulls when slaughtered yield but very little tallow. I slaughtered one on the 23d ult. which had 95 lbs. and weighed 1386 lbs. He was 3 years 10 months old, seven eighths native breed, one eighth Hortholme. He was kept for cows and milked about 12 months, and was a very good milker, yielding about 9 quarts before he was killed, during which time he ate about 1 peck of cob and corn meal per day, and the last half of the time I gave him half a bushel of roots per day.

I noticed an article in your paper respecting making butter from scalded milk and was induced to try the experiment. The last time I slaughtered was of an inferior quality as the milk was mostly from cows that were with calf. After scalding the milk I churned it with a butter churn, and the butter was as good as any I ever had. The milk was the last strip of the same cows as the other.

If you can select anything from the above lines which you think worthy a place in your paper, you have the liberty to put it in what form you please. Respectfully Yours, &c., CALEB NOURSE.

Bolton, Jan. 3, 1844.

MR. WARD, we have had numerous advices, since we published an article on scalding milk before setting it away for the cream to rise, proving most clearly that the plan is an excellent one.

A similar plan was recommended many years ago, but we think there were few who had confidence enough in the recommendation to give it a single trial.

Our near neighbor, Mr. P. Johnson, who has a large dairy, was the first to recommend last fall in our paper, the plan of scalding the milk as soon as it comes from the cow. We saw his butter in November and tested it. We were less enabled to recommend the practice with much confidence.

All accounts are uniform in commending this mode of treating milk in autumn and in winter. [Editor.]

### FAT CATTLE—PREMIUM OR NO PREMIUM.

MR. EDITOR:—Sir:—Without intending to cast any reproach on the committee on fat cattle for the Plymouth County Agricultural Society for 1842, I would like to present before the public a statement respecting a snug built yoke of oxen exhibited by my townsman, Mr. Elisha G. Leach, with the hope of obtaining a small compensation for the extra expense he had been at in fattening them.

The oxen were driven to New Bedford in December following the Cattle Show, and when killed, weighed as follows. One weighed eleven hundred and fifty-five pounds and had one hundred and ninety pounds of tallow. The other weighed eleven hundred and sixty-five pounds with one hundred and sixty-nine pounds of tallow. The encouragement he received to try again was a copy of the "New England Farmer."

### A TOUGH TEST, BUT TRUE.

MR. EDITOR:—As your paper is devoted to agriculture, the raising of Stock, &c., as I have frequently read accounts of large cattle I have felt liberty to send you the weight of a Bull (part native and part Durham) that I slaughtered last winter which is as follows.

1 quarter	309
1 "	317
1 "	369
1 "	296
1 "	172
Hide	172
Tallow	63
	1627

If you should hear of any better one being killed, I should like to be informed of it through your useful paper. Yours with respect,  
JOEL TUCKER.  
Monson, Jan. 4th, 1844.

HOME MANUFACTURES. The Madisonian states that the dress worn by the President on the first of January, was of "American manufacture and presented to him by a friend in Philadelphia. The cloth was perhaps as good as any work on the occasion."

This is well, and when we learn that the President continues to wear "home manufactures" and selects the next suit that he buys from American manufacture, we will give him full credit for the whole.

MR. WARD, we have had a very interesting and complimentary letter, but not for publication, from a gentleman in Springfield, on the raising of beans.—We can think of no good reason for his unwillingness to let us publish it unless it is the fear of being chosen a dupe of his parish.

COOKING SALT FISH. Some people are yet incredulous on the subject of cooking fish. It should never be boiled, for boiling hardens it; but it should be kept in scalding water for two or three hours.—No matter how small is the quantity of water if it covers the fish.

### APHORISM.

Since all men subscribe  
By the produce of earth,  
To the time of their death,  
From the moment of birth,—  
Why can't we afford to cultivate soil,  
While Heaven's wares to feed attend every toil?  
East Randolph, January, 10th, 1844.

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The Boston Courier says:—"We do love to hear the praises of Massachusetts. The sound makes us proud of our citizenship, and makes an aspiration of homage to that Providence which has cast our lot within her borders. It is true that her sister States of New England have many attributes and characteristics in common with her, and a man of ordinary desires for competency, health, happiness, liberty, need not complain of his fate, if he should enjoy the privilege of a residence in any one of them. But, free, enlightened, improving, and prosperous as they are, it must be confessed that Massachusetts is not the most desirable of the great north."

These, and a variety of similar thoughts were awakened on reading, in the Merchant's Magazine for November, its article on "Massachusetts and her Resources." The article, written by the Hon. John C. Calhoun, is one of the most valuable of the kind that we have seen.

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### CRISTIE MUSINGS. No. 22.

"Look here, upon this farm, and upon this," said Capt. Jethro, as we were slowly moving on together over an interesting part of our old Bay State, and at length came to a stand. We had just entered upon the borders of one of the most early settled towns in the interior of the Commonwealth. The Capt. had formerly lived here, and knew all about both people and place.

"How nobly has nature done for them here," said he. "I need not tell you that the broad elevated valley, sloping down from a sort of table land above, quite to the river's margin, contains some of the best soil in New England. And indeed there is now and then one among them that is no mean farmer. But come; here is a lesson for us close by. I am no great at quoting Shakespeare; but our girls often have a spice of more than compass, and sometimes a scrap or two will pop into my noddle, and so, I again say, 'look here, upon this picture, (I mean this little twenty acre lot,) and upon this,' on the opposite side."

I am pleasure to witness how much may be done with a little, if you are only determined to try. This man on the right here, is a mechanic, a cart and wheelwright, and an excellent and faithful workman; and yet he so manages his little farm, that he can afford to give a garden lot, that his example is worthy of being copied by those who make agriculture a profession. As often as he finds opportunity he is out with his boys on some part of his lands, making improvement. The plough is an important implement with him, and whenever he gets it, which he always does for himself, he lays the soil, as level as the floor of a dancing hall.

"None of your skimming, surface work for me," says he; "down with it, and rummage the subsoil. Look at this small orchard of fifty trees. How thrifty, bright, and clean! when it first came into his possession there were borers in plenty; but now go search for them, and you will make poor wages at a shilling a day. His soil is of a rich, deep, and naturally abundant. His meadows yield him two tons per acre; and, in fact, no farm within my acquaintance is more productive. The fences are good, and the neat and tidy appearance of the buildings, as well as the industry of the husbandman, are all to be seen."

Do you wonder at all this, the owner being a mechanic, and pretending not to be a farmer at all? You will read Hudson's most excellent address at the Worcester fair as no doubt it will be published in the agriculturalist, not one word of which will escape the special notice and consideration of this very mechanic, who well knows, too, the value of a newspaper in his family. You will there see how much a little, constant, daily labor on the soil, expended by others than your crafty farmer, will bring to pass; and you will see nothing strange in this case. This, sir, in short, is the best effect of good husbandry. Here is the good and faithful servant, who experiences both the profit and pleasure of doing a duty, and who, being faithful in a little gains the confidence of all, and is sure to be entrusted with more. Now just turn about, and you will see quite a different scene."

I am writing for the purpose of those whose hour is a sad nature reclaimed and beautified, whose chosen occupation is that enjoyed by Heaven's primeval order; and whose delight it is to see cultivation in all its glory, and the wilderness blooming with the fruits of the earth. I am, however, a little out of the way, and I am sure to be entrusted with more. Now just turn about, and you will see quite a different scene."

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"Well done, Bob! that's a good song, and no mistake," cried the Capt. "I should like a copy." "Here is one at your service," replied the young man. So, after thanking him for the favor, and commending him for his industry, good habits, and cheerful spirit, "Now, Bob, mind the main chance, and keep your pocket full," said he, then cracked his whip, and we were on our way again. But farms and farming were still the topics of conversation for miles, and we agreed in the opinion, that agriculture, however low it had heretofore been in the country, was now "pretty well going ahead," as he expressed it; "the cause of which," said he again, "I am apt to think, is that science has now a finger in the pie."

It is not often the case, reader, that a mechanic is a better farmer than many of his large land-holding neighbors, who have no other occupation than that of husbandry. A mechanic wants no more land than what he can manage to good purpose. He has no pride of territory; no ambition to be lord of the manor, and monarch of all he surveys. Do we not, however, sometimes see farmers whose lands, crops, orchards, buildings, forests, fences, and flocks, are all under their observation, and receive every requisite attention? Whenever he is such an one will surely find that a little lot will serve to keep him busy, and will yield him the greatest profit. He will be a good husbandman, and a good citizen, and in hunting woodcocks. So I think, and so does my friend and neighbor, Capt. Jethro; but, if the reader is of a different opinion, he will recollect that the editor's sheet is ever open to communications.

MR. WARD, we have had a very interesting and complimentary letter, but not for publication, from a gentleman in Springfield, on the raising of beans.—We can think of no good reason for his unwillingness to let us publish it unless it is the fear of being chosen a dupe of his parish.

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